UNITED
NATIONS

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Secretariat

ST/IC/1995/84
30 November 1995

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: 1996 COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR FRENCH TRANSLATORS/PRÉCIS-WRITERS

1. A competitive examination for the recruitment of French translators/précis-writers will be held on 7 and 8 February 1996 in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Paris and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for French translators/précis-writers at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and at other duty stations in Africa, Asia and Europe will be filled. Staff members who are successful in this examination and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies as they occur, on the recommendation of the Office of Conference and Support Services. Assignments are subject to rotation and translators/précis-writers may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Translators/précis-writers are expected to serve a MINIMUM OF FIVE YEARS in a language post.

2. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements. Staff members from subsidiary organs, funds or programmes of the United Nations, as well as staff members whose service is limited to special missions, are considered outside candidates for the purpose of this examination. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out below in paragraphs 10 and 11.

3. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have French as their main language; 1/

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(b) Have a perfect command of French and an excellent knowledge of English. They must also have an excellent knowledge of Arabic, Chinese, Russian or Spanish. Knowledge of additional, non-official languages and previous translation experience would be considered an asset. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages by attaching to their application a photocopy (not the original) of either a degree or certificate in the languages or a brief explanation of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from an institution of higher education at which French is the language of instruction.

4. The requirement for a degree or its equivalent mentioned in paragraph 3 (c) may be waived for staff members who had at least five years of continuous service with the Secretariat by 31 December 1989 and who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from an institution at which the language of instruction is French.

5. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **THE BOARD'S DECISIONS ARE FINAL.**

6. The written examination will consist of five papers:

(a) Translation into French of a general text in English (three hours);

(b) Translation into French of a text to be chosen by the candidate from a total of eight texts, two in Arabic, two in Chinese, two in Russian and two in Spanish (two hours);

(c) Summary in French of a speech in English (two hours);

(d) Translation into French of two English texts to be chosen by the candidate from a total of five specialized texts (economic, legal, scientific, social and technical) (three hours);

(e) (Optional) Translation into French of one general text to be chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts, in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish (two hours). Candidates who write this optional paper must choose a language other than the language(s) which they chose in paper (b) of the examination.

7. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material is NOT permitted during the examination.

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8. On the basis of the results obtained in the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview, which will normally take place 10 to 12 weeks after the written component of the examination. The interview will consist in part of an oral translation, which the candidate will be asked to do after 30 minutes' preparation. In addition, the Board will interview each candidate to assess general knowledge, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations, willingness to serve at any duty station and ability to work as a member of a team. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited to an interview SHOULD NOT assume that they will be assigned as a translator/ précis-writer.

9. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are NOT subject to appeal. The Board DOES NOT release individual results.

10. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as French translators/précis-writers for a trial period of two years. Staff members at the P-1 level or below will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

11. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Office of Conference and Support Services and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their translation functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

12. French translators/précis-writers are called upon to translate into French from English and also from the other official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish) and occasionally from other languages. They are also required to attend meetings of United Nations bodies and draft French summary records of the proceedings.

13. Upon completion of a training period, if necessary, translators/précis-writers will be required to work on word-processing or similar data-entry equipment.

14. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, NOT LATER THAN 2 January 1996, to:

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Competitive Examination for French Translators/Précis-writers
Specialist Services Division
Room S-2560
United Nations Secretariat
New York, NY 10017

Fax: (1-212) 963-3683

15. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their application to the Specialist Services Division through the chief administrative officer or director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations before 2 January 1996, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Specialist Services Division.

16. Staff members may obtain copies of model examination papers from the Examinations and Tests Section, room S-2560, United Nations Secretariat New York, NY 10017. Staff members serving at the United Nations Office at Geneva may obtain such copies from the Training and Examinations Section, Villa Le Bocage, Office 4.

Notes

1/ "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to translate. Candidates' claims to French as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

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APPLICATION

1996 COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR FRENCH TRANSLATORS/PRÉCIS-WRITERS 1/

INDEX NO. 2/ /_/_/_/_/_/

LAST NAME /_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/

FIRST NAME /_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/

Category /_/_/ Level /_/_/

Sex: Male /_/ Female /_/

Date of entry on duty: Month /_/_/ Year 19 /_/_/

Type of contract: _____ Expiration date: _____

Department/Office 3/ _____ Duty station: _____

Room No. _____ Extension _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes /_/ in 19 /_/_/ No /_/

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes /_/ in 19 /_/_/ No /_/

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language? 4/ /_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/

A. Knowledge of other languages 5/

1. Courses taken at:

Language(s)	United Nations language programme (indicate highest level and date)	Other institution (name and location)

2. Indicate your ability in each of the languages mentioned above

Language	Read		Understand		Speak		Write	
	Easily	Not easily	Easily	Not easily	Fluently	Not fluently	Easily	Not easily

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B. Degree or equivalent or post-secondary educational qualifications

Name of institution (place and country)	Language of instruction	Attended from/to		Degree 6/ or equivalent	Main field of study
		Month/year	Month/year		

C. Secondary school qualifications

Name of institution (place and country)	Language of instruction	Attended from/to		Certificate or equivalent 6/	Main field of study
		Month/year	Month/year		

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/1995/84 and I understand that, if I am successful in the competitive examination for French translators/précis-writers and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a French translator/précis-writer will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 10 and 11 of that circular.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Notes

1/ Staff members applying for this examination MUST COMPLETE THIS SECTION. In addition, staff members MUST ATTACH written proof of claimed secondary educational qualifications from establishments at which French is the language of instruction. Written proof of claimed post-secondary education must also be attached unless they were convoked for the G to P examination for promotion to the Professional category or another language examination. Applications which are incomplete or do not include essential information or documentation will be returned to the staff member FOR COMPLETION AND RESUBMISSION WITHIN THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS in the Specialist Services Division. Extensions for receipt of applications will NOT be granted.

2/ Appears normally on your monthly salary statement and Personnel Action forms. If not, please contact your Executive Officer to obtain your number.

3/ E.g., Office of Conference and Support Services, ECE, UNCTAD, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Vienna.

4/ "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to translate. Candidates' claims to French as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

5/ Candidates are reminded that they must submit relevant documentation to substantiate their claims as appropriate in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 (b) of information circular ST/IC/1995/84.

6/ Give exact name and title in original language. Do not translate or equate.